

# Australian Garden History Society ACT Monaro Riverina Branch



Newsletter June 2019 No 3

Australian Garden History Society  
[www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, PO Box 5008, LYNEHAM ACT 2602  
For an e-copy of the newsletter email [judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au](mailto:judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au)

## BRANCH DIARY

### 13 JUNE

Lecture: Ocean's Gay flowers, speaker Julie Ryder

### 4 JULY

Lecture: *Shared dreams and destinies: botanic gardens of Melbourne and Sydney*, speaker Prof. Tim Entwistle

### 22 AUGUST

Branch AGM

### 22 AUGUST

Annual Lecture: *Gardens on the Edge*, speaker Christine Reid

### 25-27 OCTOBER 2019

AGHS National Conference . Wellington, NZ

## NEXT EVENTS

### *Lecture: Ocean's Gay Flowers – uncovering the mysteries of Australian seaweed collections of the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

**SPEAKER: JULIE RYDER**

**THURSDAY 13 JUNE 6PM**



Julie Ryder, award winning art-science practitioner, describes her journey to identify the anonymous collector of an album of seaweed specimens from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This quest began with her arts residency at the National Museum of Australia in 2016. Her research connects this album with others held in the collections of several Australian institutions, provides new information and subsequent provenance to these holdings, and focuses on a very prolific and largely unknown collector of algae. In 2018 Julie followed clues in the albums to Ireland, where she uncovered the missing links held within several cultural institutions. The residencies and research for over two years

provided the inspiration for her solo exhibition *The Hidden Sex* held at Craft ACT earlier this year.

Julie is a professional textile designer and artist who has gained international recognition for her work that combines her expertise and interest in both science and art. After a preliminary career working in science, Julie retrained as a textile designer, graduating from the Melbourne Institute of Textiles in 1990 and going on to do a Masters at the Canberra School of Art, ANU.

She was awarded the 2004 ANAT Synapse Artist in Residence to work alongside Dr Christine Cargill, curator of the Cryptogam Herbarium at the ANBG, and they have maintained a close working relationship on several art-sci projects and exhibitions. Since then Julie has held prestigious arts residencies at CSIRO; Asialink, the National Museum of Australia, the Ulster Museum in Belfast and at Cill Riallaig in Ireland.

Since becoming obsessed by all things seaweed, she can either be found on a beach somewhere collecting specimens, or in a herbarium basement poring through 19<sup>th</sup> century

**BRANCH  
COMMITTEE**

**Sue Byrne**, Chair  
**Judy Pearce**, Dep. Chair  
 & Newsletter Editor  
**Helen Elliot**, Treasurer  
**Anne Claoue-Long**,  
 State NMC  
 Representative  
**Nancy Clarke**, Secretary

**Bronwyn Blake** (also an  
 elected member on NMC)  
**Sue Cassidy**  
**Wendy Dodd**  
**Greg Johnson**  
**Helen Wilson**

collections. Occasionally she surfaces to conduct textile workshops in natural dyeing, indigo dyeing and screen-printing, both nationally and internationally.

Her work is represented in many public and private collections. For more information visit her website at <http://www.julieyryder.com.au>

**Venue** Theatre, Canberra Museum and Gallery, Crn London Cct and Civic Square.

**Cost** \$15 members, \$20 non-members (plus 50c ticket fee) including refreshments

**Bookings** Through TryBooking, <https://www.trybooking.com/BASQA>  
 You may pay by debit or credit card.

**Enquiries** [judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au](mailto:judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au), 0417 250 058

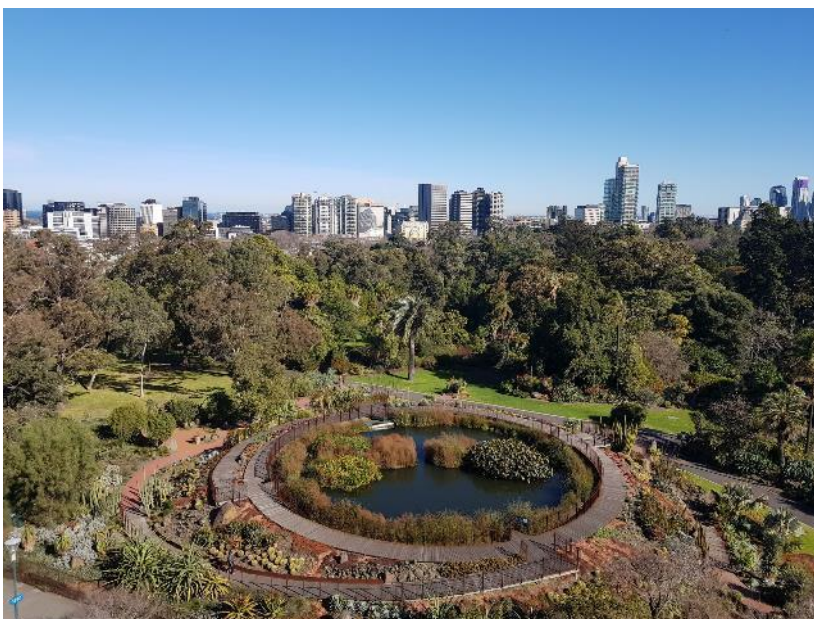
We thank Canberra Museum and Gallery for their support for this lecture.

## **Lecture: *Shared dreams and destinies: botanic gardens of Melbourne and Sydney***

**SPEAKER: PROFESSOR TIMOTHY J ENTWISLE  
 THURSDAY 4 JULY, 6PM**

A joint event with the Friends of the National Library

Sydney's Royal Botanic Garden turned 200 in 2016, and Melbourne's celebrates its 175<sup>th</sup> in 2021. They are two of the older botanic gardens outside of Europe, and today they demonstrate how beautiful heritage landscapes can display and interpret stunning plant collections. Both stuttered in their beginnings but through the varied influences of directors such as Charles Moore, Ferdinand Mueller, William Guilfoyle and Joseph Maiden, it's fair to say they exceeded expectations by the early years of the twentieth century. There are some curious parallels in their development, and undoubtedly more in their future. Climate change, financial security and that growing community ailment, plant blindness will test both gardens as they negotiate the next century or two.



**Photo: Melbourne Botanic Gardens from Fairlea**

**Professor Timothy J Entwisle** is Director and Chief Executive of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, home to two of the world's most beautiful and inspiring botanic garden landscapes, in Melbourne and Cranbourne. Under his leadership the RBGV is transforming into an outward-looking organisation with a focus as much on people as plants. Creative events such as *Fire Gardens* in October 2018 illustrate the mix of nature, culture and science that Tim sees as the strength of a contemporary botanic garden.

Tim is a highly respected scientist, scientific communicator and botanic gardens director. He took up the role at RBGV in March 2013, following two years in a senior role at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and eight years as Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust in Sydney. He is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at The University of Melbourne, and a regular contributor to print, radio (including ABC RN's *Blueprint for Living*) and social media.

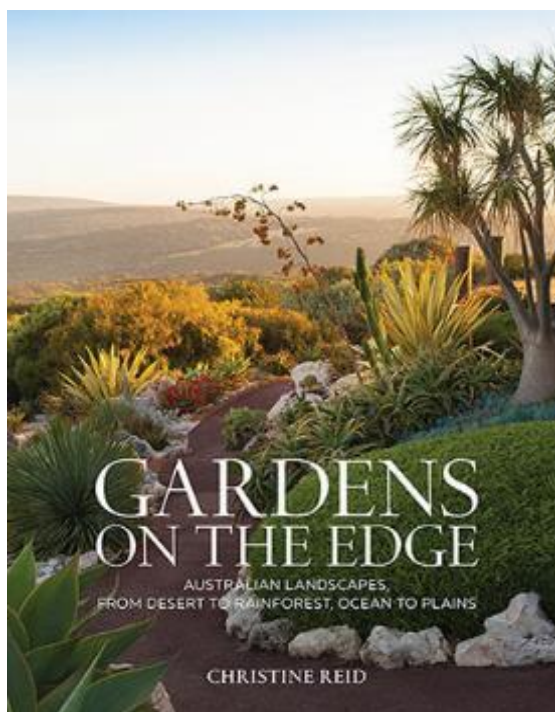
He has a broad interest in all plants and related life forms and you can visit his blog at <http://talkingplants.blogspot.com/>.



**Venue** Theatre, National Library of Australia  
**Cost** \$20 for AGHS members and Friends of the NLA, \$25 for non-members includes refreshments.  
**Booking** Bookings through the NLA at <https://www.nla.gov.au/event/shared-dreams-and-destinies>  
**NO** bookings to be made through AGHS.

## **Annual Lecture: *Gardens on the Edge: Australian Landscapes from desert to rainforest, ocean to plains***

**SPEAKER: CHRISTINE REID**  
**THURSDAY 22 AUGUST, 6.15PM**



In a journey through Australian landscapes Christine Reid will talk about her recently published book which focusses on stunning Australian gardens, each bordering a natural 'frontier', including rainforest, river, desert, bushland, saltbush plains, volcanic lake, mountain ranges and the ocean's edge

In breathtaking images and insightful essays, the book explores 18 Australian gardens that are defined by extraordinary horizons. Each of the featured landscapes - from every state and territory, from outback to city - is situated on the edge of a natural frontier: rainforest, desert, bushland, river, mountain range, volcanic crater lake, coast, harbour, saltbush plains. In another sense, Australian gardens and their owners are always 'on the edge' in dealing with the endless vagaries of nature, from drought to dust, fires to flood. In telling the stories of the gardens

and their owners, Christine Reid reveals the diversity and character of the Australian continent - and celebrates the imagination and resilience of those who have met the challenges of creating, reconstructing or restoring their 'vision splendid' in an ancient and often-unforgiving land



**Christine Reid** As a garden writer with a wide-ranging background in newspapers and magazines, Christine Reid's principal interest is the social and cultural history of gardens and designed landscapes, historic and contemporary. Her extensive writings on gardens appear in major lifestyle magazines both in Australia and the UK; she has been the Australian contributor to the English publication *Gardens Illustrated* since 1998. Christine has also been writer and consulting editor for many international garden books including *The Oxford Companion to the Garden* (Oxford University Press, 2006) and *The Gardeners' Garden* (Phaidon, 2014). She is a longstanding member of AGHS.

**Venue** The Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, 15 Blackall St, Barton  
**Parking** On site (the boom gate will be open), or in adjacent streets  
**Cost** \$15 members, \$20 non-members (plus 50c ticket fee) including refreshments  
**Bookings** Through TryBooking, <https://www.trybooking.com/BBZWN>  
 You may pay by debit or credit card.  
**Enquiries** Greg Johnson [greggh4d@gmail.com](mailto:greggh4d@gmail.com)

## Branch Annual General Meeting

THURSDAY 22 AUGUST, 5.45PM

The AGM of the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch of the AGHS will be held at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture just prior to the 2019 Annual Lecture (see above). An Agenda will be included in the August Newsletter.

Committee nominations close **11 July 2019**. We would welcome new committee members so if you are interested in joining the Committee and would like to talk to someone about it please contact our Secretary Nancy Clarke [clarkenancy624@gmail.com](mailto:clarkenancy624@gmail.com), 0423 690 626.

Committee members serve a term of three years, with the option of extending for two further terms. We meet once a month and all Committee members take a role in organising Society events and/or the Committee's business activities

## BRANCH NEWS

### PROPOSED GARDEN BOOK SALE

Turn your preloved garden books into funds for our digitisation project



During the AGHS 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year in 2020 your Branch committee proposes to hold a special garden themed bookstall as a fundraiser to support the digitisation project.

The digitisation project was outlined in the August 2018 newsletter and we have already received a generous donation from a branch member. In addition we are applying for funding from the AGHS head office Anniversary budget, are using Branch funds for the

cause and are also seeking donations of members garden related books for a book sale to supplement this.

So if you are downsizing, or just pruning your home library, please consider passing your surplus gardening, horticulture or garden history books to the committee for sale amongst the local membership sometime in the next year. Not only will you ensure your preloved books go to a good home, you will be helping preserve garden history in printed form through the digitisation project.

To arrange leaving your donations at our next event, dropping them off in the inner north of Canberra, or, if you have many boxes for collection (one always hopes) please email: [annecl@icloud.com](mailto:annecl@icloud.com)

**Anne Claoue-Long**

## NEW MEMBERS

The committee would like to welcome the following new member who has joined since the last newsletter.

- Kathy Jeffreys, Delegate

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH NEWS

### *RECORDING GARDENS WORKSHOP: SUNDAY 28 JULY*

### *VISIT TO THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOOWOOMBA CARNIVAL OF FLOWERS & THE MARGARET OLLEY ART CENTRE IN MURWILLUMBAH 19 – 26 SEPTEMBER*

The SH Branch has two exciting events coming up and as usual our members are invited to participate.

The first is a **Recording Gardens Workshop on Sunday July 28**, based on the recently republished AGHS publication *Recording Gardens: Preparing for Conservation or Restoration*. They have an exciting line up of speakers:

- Professor Craig Burton - *Recording the cultural and environmental context and drawing your garden*
- Ashley Macevicius . *Photographing your garden*
- Chris Betteridge . *Gathering existing history and determining its future*
- Charlotte Webb . *Recording Gardens – case studies*

There will also be a practical element to the day at *Moidart*.

The second **a week long bus trip to Toowoomba and Murwillumbah from Thursday 19 – Thursday 26 September** organised by AGHS member Ray Bradley.

Rather than try to include all the details for these two events in our newsletter I am sending under separate cover the May *Inflorescence* which has all the details on the workshop, and an additional attachment with the tour details and booking form.



Just a reminder that the publication *Recording Gardens: Preparing for Conservation or Restoration* are available through the AGHS Website . BUT you can also buy copies from our Branch at \$20 member, \$25 non-members . we will bring them to events, or you can email me at [judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au](mailto:judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au) if you want one.

The book aims to explain the art of recording a garden in straightforward, step-by-step terms. It includes only how to measure and draw the outline of an existing garden but also how to record its man-made and natural features. Further, it provides tips on noting the plants that are grown in the garden, soil type, orientation and other influences such as climate and features that lie over the garden wall.

## PAST EVENTS

### *Visit to the new Solander Garden at the Embassy of Sweden*

**SATURDAY 23 MARCH**

In 2017, the AGHS partnered with the Friends of the National Library for a lecture, *Discovering Ferdinand Bauer*, by a former Australian Ambassador to Austria, David Stuart. The lecture explored the art of Ferdinand Bauer, who accompanied Captain James Cook and Sir Joseph Banks on the 1769-1770 voyage of discovery around New Zealand and along the east coast of Australia.

Following on from the lecture in March this year, the AGHS, along with members of the Friends of the National Library and the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Garden, were invited to visit the Solander Garden and the opening of the Sixten Bock photograph exhibition at the Swedish Embassy, Canberra.

On a pleasant autumn afternoon, the Ambassador of Sweden, H. E. Mr Pär Ahlberger), and Mrs Hélène Ahlberger Le Deunff, welcomed Members and Friends to the Embassy grounds. Ambassador Ahlberger explained the history of the Embassy, the initiative for the Solander Garden, and the background to the travelling exhibition of Sixten Bock photography. Ambassador Ahlberger also mentioned that he and his wife were keen gardeners!

Guest speakers were: Peter Feilen and Janine Hurstone of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, Specialist Horticulture Team and Dr Aoife O'Brien, Curator, Oceania, National Museums of World Culture in Sweden. After the talks, members had time to wander through the garden and then visit the exhibition inside the Ambassador's residence and enjoy refreshments on the Embassy terrace.



**Photo: Mr Pär Ahlberger and Janine Hurstone**

*Daniel Solander.* The Solander Garden celebrates the Swedish Naturalist, Daniel Solander (1733-1782) who accompanied Cook and J Banks on the Endeavour voyage to explore the Pacific in 1768-1771. Daniel Solander was a former student and botanical



assistant of Carl Linnaeus, the founder of modern systematics, and from 1760, assistant keeper at what later became the British Museum. Solander joined the expedition to the Pacific at the invitation of Joseph Banks, becoming the first Swede to circumnavigate the globe. During the voyage, Banks and Solander collected 110 previously unknown plant genera and 1300 new species (<https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/Science/The-Botany-of-Botany-Bay/Plants/Banks-and-Solander-species-list>).

In 1772, Solander travelled with Banks on his voyage to Iceland, the Hebrides and the Orkney Islands. Between 1773 and 1782 he was Keeper of the Natural History Department of the British Museum, and continued to collaborate with Banks in describing the Australian and New Zealand flora ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel\\_Solander](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Solander)). Unfortunately plans to publish the *Florilegium* faltered when Solander died in 1782, and the splendid full colour illustrations of the botanical specimens were not published in full until 1980-1990 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banks%27\\_Florilegium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banks%27_Florilegium)).

**The Swedish Embassy.** Work on the Swedish Embassy in Canberra began on the 3 hectare site in 1947 with post-war shortages delaying completion until 1951. Design and construction were undertaken in partnership between Swedish and Australian specialists, with materials and fittings sourced from Sweden and Australia. In 1952, the Embassy building was the recipient of an Architectural Prize, the Sir John Sulman Medal, presented by the New South Wales chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects since 1932. It was the first building in Canberra to be so honoured and the first by a foreign power!

**Solander Garden.** The Solander Garden was opened on 7 September, 2017. After the National Property Board of Sweden completed restoration of the Swedish embassy building in Canberra, the ambassador, Pär Ahlberger, proposed a garden in memory of Daniel Solander, to be located in a former carpark in front of the Embassy building.

The Ambassador sought advice from the ANBG to choose plants associated with Solander. In an ongoing project, plantings have included *Correa alba*, *Correa reflexa*, *Epacris longiflora*, *Melaleuca viminalis*, *Dianella caerulea*, *Pandorea pandorana*, *Banksia* spp and *Allocasuarina* spp, and other plants suited to Canberra's climate. And, although he did not collect it, a specimen of the Western Australian plant named after Solander, *Banksia solandrii*, (Left) was also on display during our visit, courtesy of the ANBG.

**Sixten Bock.** Sixten Bock (1884-1946) was a Swedish Zoologist who travelled to the Pacific in 1917-18. Bock's travels included Siberia, Japan, Australia, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Australia, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu, New Britain and New Ireland, New Zealand, the Cook Islands and Tahiti, and he returned home via the USA. Bock's most extensive stay was in Kiribati and Tuvalu (then known as Gilbert and Ellice Islands) where he made observations and collected specimens of the marine fauna.

Bock's collections of ethnographic objects and photographs are available at the National Museum of World Culture in Stockholm and today represent important scientific records and cultural memories for Pacific peoples. The exhibition featured Bock's ethnographic photographs which have been digitised and made available to the countries where the photographs were originally taken.

**Greg Johnson**



## **National Trust Heritage Festival Open Day Gungahlin Homestead**

**SATURDAY 13 APRIL**

Our Branch held an information stall at Gungahlin Homestead on the opening day of the Heritage Festival on 13<sup>th</sup> April. This was the second time we have held a stall during an open day of Gungahlin Homestead, the first being two years ago. There was a smaller crowd this year however there was a steady stream of visitors who were given information about the Society. Copies of *Recording Gardens* and *Early Ainslie Gardens* were for sale and copies of past AGHS journals were handed out to encourage new members.

Gillian Bellas had a wonderful display of her cards and pictures which was a colourful drawcard for the stall providing an opening to discuss the work of the organisation.

There were many stalls from different organisations, some along the driveway, in tents and others under the shelter of one of the buildings. There were tours of part of Gungahlin Homestead. In the courtyard there were musical performances and dancing.

A sunny calm day made it a pleasant venue.

**Wendy Dodd**



Photo: AGHS chair Sue Byrne on the stall

## **A Visit to the Director's Residence and Garden Mt Stromlo**

**SUNDAY 5 MAY**

It's now more than sixteen years since the terrible firestorm that destroyed so much of the Observatory buildings and infrastructure at Mt Stromlo, razing the pine plantation that had been a familiar part of Canberra's skyline since the 1920s.

Over the last few years the ANU, with support from various heritage grants, has stabilised the site, rebuilt or restored some of the buildings, created a signed heritage trail, and re-created the gardens that link the Director's Residence with the Observatory itself.

On a brisk autumn afternoon Amy Jarvis, ANU Heritage Adviser, led





a group of 40 enthusiasts around the site. The visit was a joint AGHS/National Trust ACT event, and a component of the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival.

We started at the burnt-out shell of the Yale Columbia Dome where Amy gave us background information. Indigenous people had used the hilltop as a vantage point for thousands of years, but its use as an observatory goes back to the days when Canberra was just the designated site for the national capital.

As with all of Canberra's early tree planting the name of Charles Weston looms large. In 1911 a temporary observatory was built on Mt Stromlo, and in 1912 Charles Scrivener, director of Commonwealth land and surveys, advised the Secretary of Home Affairs that Weston could "superintend the preparation of land at Strom [sic] and get ready the land for plantations on the sides of the hill to improve atmospheric conditions". Huge plantings followed, with *Pinus insignis (radiata)* the preferred species. Between 1915 and 1925 over 900,000 of these Monterey pines were planted at Stromlo, creating what became the dense forest familiar to many but also creating the environment for a major fire in 1952, and of course the devastating fire of 2003.

From the Dome we walked past the ghosts of telescopes and the site of the extraordinary workshops where the engineering and technical staff made just about anything the astronomers requested, to the Commonwealth Solar Observatory Building (built 1926), and finished by walking through the recently reconstructed "orchard" to the Director's Residence. This orchard is special. It was originally planted in the 1920s, and in a 2004 interview Joan Duffield, daughter of the first Director at Mt Stromlo, recalled it including "apples, pears, oranges, lemons, peaches, apricots, plums and nectarines, which all did well".

This small orchard acquired important symbolic as well as functional value: it marked the barrier between work and home life for the Directors and their families, so that in an oral history interview Professor Don Mathewson, Observatory Director 1979-1986, mentioned that "once you passed through the orchard you were home".

Having explored the history of the site, Harris Hobbs Landscapes designed a landscape plan that re-established the formal pathway between the Observatory and the Residence, but used ornamental rather than productive fruit trees (ornamental apples, pears, olives, pomegranates etc) to reflect but not replace the original plantings.

We finished our tour at the Director's Residence . once the grandest house in Canberra, designed by the Supervising Architect for the Federal Capital Territory, Henry Maitland Rolland, with its somewhat basic amenities enhanced by personal funds from the wealthy Duffield family. The house was gutted in 2003, but is now magnificently restored on the outside. Inside however it has been retained in its melancholy (stabilised) fire-damaged state, with excellent signposting and commentary.

Some of the remnant plantings outside the Residence are believed to show the familiar hand of Lindsay Pryor, Director of Parks and Gardens in the ACT from 1944 to 1958. The original croquet lawn has been reinterpreted in a new format, and is bordered by plantings of lavender and roses, which are both mentioned in the historical record. We are most grateful to the informed, engaging and detailed guidance of Amy Jarvis, who made this a quite exceptional visit.

**Nancy Clarke**



**Photo: Sue Byrne thanking Amy Jarvis for a wonderful tour**

## AGHS NATIONAL NEWS

### AGHS ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

25 – 27 October, Museum of NZ Te Papa Tongarewa  
*Expanding Horizons*

**AGHS WEB SITE**

#### AGHS National Oral History Collection

The Society is excited to announce the National Oral History Collection has commenced going online with our first interview with Dame Elizabeth Murdoch AC, DBE. It is available at <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications-projects/?category=National+Oral+History+Collection>

The NMC has worked towards this development for some time is pleased to see the Collection come to life on screen and on speaker. It is expected that more interviews will quickly follow so please keep an eye out for them under the projects and reports tab.

Remember as an AGHS member you can download all journals for free and receive other discounts on purchases by applying the code: **member7694** at the checkout

## A REQUEST FROM THE NCA

The National Capital Authority is asking Canberrans to help design our Future Forest. They want us to tell them what we want more of as they start the future planning of our National Land green spaces. They have designed a 5 minute survey so that we can have our say on the future of this amazing asset. It is not clear how long this survey will be up for, but I have spoken to Duncan MacLennan from the NCA and he says it will be available until at least the end of June. To participate go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/outtrees>

Duncan sent me the following information which may influence your response.

The National Capital Authority maintain and manage over 18,000 trees. One of our oldest trees is a Bunya Pine. It was 92 years old on the 10 May 2019.

The top ten trees in the National Land are

- Eucalyptus mannifera (1738, 11.81%)
- Eucalyptus bicostata (1727, 11.73%)
- Eucalyptus melliodora (856, 5.82%)
- Eucalyptus polyanthemas (788, 5.35%)
- Quercus palustris (659, 4.48 %)
- Casuarina cunninghamiana (595, 4.04%)
- Eucalyptus blakelyi (572, 3.89%)
- Quercus robur (525, 3.57%)
- Ulmus americana (503, 3.42%)
- Eucalyptus sideroxylon (448, 4.04%)

## OF INTEREST

**HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA**

<http://www.hsoc.org.au/index.htm>

**NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA**

[www.arboretumcanberra.org.au](http://www.arboretumcanberra.org.au)

**AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS**  
[www.anbg.gov.au](http://www.anbg.gov.au)

Lectures on a variety of topics are offered by the Friends of the National Botanic Gardens at 12.30pm on most Thursdays. No bookings are required, entry by gold coin donation. Be warned that the talks are very popular and spaces are limited. For details and updates check the Friends website at [www.friendsanbg.org.au](http://www.friendsanbg.org.au).

**LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)**  
<http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au/>